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SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ELA AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2018
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [JO](#) [CY](#)
SUBJECT: JORDANIAN CONVERT CHARGED WITH APOSTASY, FLEES TO
CYPRUS

REF: 4/25/2008 EMAIL WCOFSKY TO DGREENE

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Mohammad Abbad Abdel-Qader Abbad, brought before the Suweileh Shari,a Court on charges of apostasy on March 24, 2008 for his conversion to Christianity, has subsequently fled Jordan with his wife, Muna Khader Naseef Al-Habash, and two children to Cyprus, where he is seeking asylum. End Summary.

12. (C) According to post contacts with a direct knowledge of the case, Mohammad Abbad Abdel-Qader Abbad (who also goes by the name Ramzi), aged 40, who converted from Islam to Christianity in 1993, was brought to Suweileh Shariah Court on charges of apostasy after his Muslim father registered the conversion with the local police on March 23, 2008. Abbad,s brother had also converted from Islam to Christianity in 2006, but recanted that same year under pressure from his Muslim wife. In September 2007, the same sister-in-law herself converted to Christianity and Abbad,s brother followed suit to once again become a Christian. However, Abbad,s sister-in-law,s family discovered the conversion in March 2008 and, according to Abbad, began threatening her and her husband. The couple then took refuge in Abbad,s house on March 21. According to Abbad, when his brother,s in-laws discovered their whereabouts, three male relatives attacked him and his brother and forcibly kidnapped his sister-in-law.

13. (C) According to Abbad, when he and his brother arrived at the police station to register the assault, they discovered their father had filed an apostasy complaint against them, and had requested custody of Abbad,s children. Abbad and his brother were then taken to Suweileh Shari,a Court, presided over by Shari,a judge Faysal Khreisat. According to Abbad, no legal representation was provided. Abbad then testified that he had in fact converted; he was subsequently charged with contempt of court and sentenced to one week imprisonment. Abbad was taken to prison, despite his request for medical attention for injuries sustained in the attack; according to Abbad, he was finally taken to a hospital after fainting twice on his way to prison but subsequently had to move to a private hospital for treatment for injuries to his head, chest, and eye; per Abbad, he spent the night handcuffed to his bed.

14. (C) Though the Shari,a court judge initially refused bail, a relative posted \$14,000 bail on March 25. The attackers were arrested on March 26 and charged with assault. However, Abbad,s brother and his wife recanted their faith after being threatened with annulment of their marriage, and charges were subsequently dropped against the attackers.

15. (C) Facing apostasy charges and possible dissolution of his marriage and loss of his children, Mohammad Abbad himself, his wife, and two children fled Jordan to Cyprus

March 28. At a subsequent court hearing in Abbad,s apostasy trial on March 30, the absence of Abbad and his wife prompted the judge to issue warrants for the couple,s arrest. On April 22, Abbad,s 14-year marriage was legally annulled. The Shari,a Court is expected to grant legal custody of the couple,s children to Abbad,s father.

16. (C) Post understands that Abbad is currently in Cyprus seeking asylum for himself, his wife, Muna Khader Naseef Al-Habash, his eleven-year old daughter, "Joy Ramzi" Mohammad Abbad Abbad, and his ten-year old son, "Salam Ramzi" Mohammad Abbad Abbad, and that asylum papers were submitted to Embassy Nicosia in early April. Post will follow up on any movement on his case in the Suweileh Shari,a Court.

HALE